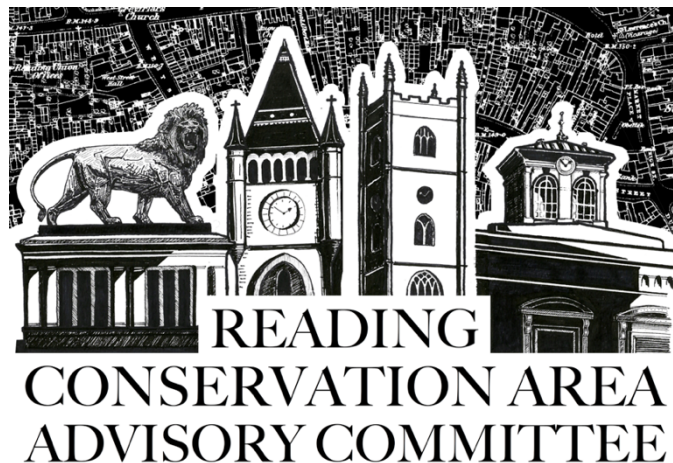




Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee

31 March 2025

Dear Sian Hickey,

OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT PL/25/0312 AND PL/25/0313 144 SOUTHAMPTON STREET

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee is pleased to be consulted on this application and listed building consent to refurbish 144 Southampton Street.

We welcome the proposal to retain the property as a single family home and we note that the applicant has sought pre-application advice. We retain our overall objection to the proposal for the reasons below.

Should additional information and documentation be supplied by the applicant some of our concerns, which also applied to the refused applications (PL/24/0656 and PL/24/0657) may be removed.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTION

- The documentation submitted does not include the expected full description of the exterior and interior of the listed building and the impact of works to be undertaken. In particular, the Heritage Assessment submitted does not include a history of the property or demonstrate the heritage impact of the proposal. Photographs of the property and a map regression should also have been included.
- Creation of a vehicular access to Southampton Street, requiring the demolition of the front garden wall is not acceptable and the damage already caused by unauthorised demolition should be rectified at the earliest opportunity.
- The application does not comply with Policy EN1 Protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

1. HERITAGE

1.1 Context and setting

1.1.1 144 Southampton Street is a Grade II listed building in a group of listed buildings from 142-152 Southampton Street covered by 3 listing entries. The official entry [1113587](#) dates the properties to the mid-nineteenth century. A comment added to the listing entry states that 144-146 date from the late eighteenth century and were once a single house. It is known that 142 is a later addition.



Figure 1 Panoramic view of 152 (left) to 142 (right) Southampton Street July 2024

1.1.2 The view down Southampton Street from the top of Whitley Street towards the town centre is one of Significant Views with Heritage Interest (View 2) protected by Policy EN2. One of the viewing spots is at the junction of Chesterman Street and Southampton Street where the Holm Oak protected by a TPO dominates the streetscape. The image in the document shows the abundance of trees in the front gardens of the terrace. The clearance of the front garden of 144 early in 2024, at the same time as part of the front wall was removed without listed building consent, has disturbed the bucolic character of this section of the street, leaving the garden open to the full force of the noise and pollution and gaze of all on this busy route into the town centre.



Figure 2 View from the junction of Southampton Street and Chesterman Street, November 2016

1.2 Heritage impact of the proposal

1.2.1 The application is for external and internal renovations and landscaping of 144 Southampton Street.

1.2.2 External works

1.2.2.1 Front Garden Wall

The owner demolished part of the front garden wall to the property, without consent in February 2024 and began to clear the front garden of trees and shrubs. The removal of the wall currently allows a vehicle to park on the property. The size of the entrance can be seen in the image below (from 26 February 2024) which also shows that any further widening of the entrance would require the utilities box and a road sign to be moved.

The Design and Access statement section 'access and landscaping' appears to suggest that the parking space will be at pavement level with steps and a retaining wall. This change in gradient is not entirely clear from the plans and should be clarified. In addition, the application is silent on whether an application will be made for a dropped kerb and how a vehicle would enter and exit the property.

A 1999 vehicle access application is relevant to this application and the assumption must be that the creation of a vehicular access would not be granted (991778 – installation of vehicular access from Southampton Street was refused on 7 December 1999).



Figure 3 Extent of demolition of wall and creation of vehicle access

1.2.2.2 Works to the exterior of the house

We note the exterior elevation diagrams showing the windows to be replaced and that otherwise they are to be repainted.

More information on the replacement of the modern (currently) dining room window should be provided. The statement is that it will be timber and 'match the existing style'. A window that is

more in keeping with the age of the building would be preferable and the design should be specified in the plans. It is not clear if the new window requires any change to the surrounding brickwork or whether it will be double or single glazed. Similarly, more information should be provided on the replacement to the first floor bathroom window. Both windows have an existing brick arch above them into which the modern windows have been inserted.

Proposed changes to the exterior fabric of the building are minimal. We think that it is unlikely to be the case in practice. Were this application to be granted any additional works would require a planning application or listed building consent and this should be secured by condition.

We would welcome the replacement of UPVC rainwater goods with cast iron.

1.2.2.3 Works to the interior of the house

The interior was stripped out early in 2024 before a planning application was submitted. We are unable to judge how much damage this caused to original fabric and fittings in the house.

The applicant should supply details of insulation or other sustainability improvements proposed for the property or confirm that there are none. The previous application included extensive sustainability measures.

Neither the plans nor the Design and Access statement mention any works to be undertaken to the cellar. The heritage assessment mentions the potential for ‘...introduction of gentle heat to this area via one or two radiators on a low setting...’. The installation of central heating to the basement would require additional intervention in the property for example for the running of pipework and as the statement goes on to say, an expert should be consulted first.

1.2.2.4 Landscaping

Rebuilding of unsafe walls to the rear garden is mentioned on page 8. Which walls require repair, their ownership (may not strictly be a planning matter), age and the heritage impact of rebuilding or repairing should be specified.

2. Other matters

2.2.1 The heritage assessment is fairly superficial and does not comment precisely on the heritage impact of the proposal.

It should include historic maps and current images of the interior. It is not enough to say that ‘This property may have been a farmhouse or small gentleman’s ‘villa’ [sic]. It would be interesting to pursue this further in future research, as eighteenth century houses in and around Reading centre are rare and therefore important’.

2.2.2 Significant damage may already have been done to the interior of the building by the stripping out undertaken during 2024. Photographs of the interior following the stripping out should have been supplied as part of this application.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 This application should be rejected for the reasons stated. In particular the parking space is entirely unacceptable.

3.2 An informed judgement cannot be made on most of the works proposed because the documentation submitted is not sufficiently explicit about the changes to be made and how they impact the heritage asset.

3.3 Should this application be approved as it stands, a long list of conditions will be required to protect against works which may be undertaken but could have significant impact on the heritage fabric and appearance of the building.

3.4 Our conclusion is that the application does not comply with policy EN1 Protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

Yours sincerely

Evelyn Williams
Chair Reading CAAC
On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
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